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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 003634

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EAIR](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)  
SUBJECT: GOP STILL NOT READY TO APPROVE PNR

Ref: A) SECSTATE 119281 B) ISLAMABAD 1587

Classified by: Ambassador for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. On November 18, DCM delivered reftel A demarche regarding data sharing for passenger name records to Ministry of Interior Secretary Kamal Shah. Shah noted that the Government of Pakistan (GOP) has been having internal discussion on the issue of providing data to fulfill the Department of Homeland Security's requirements for passenger name records. Shah elaborated to state that the "internal problems" stem from the USG request to provide data on ALL passengers on ALL flights. Shah stated that "our view is that [sharing data on] all direct flights to the US is no problem" and that "flights to Western Europe" could be considered, but was clear that the GOP was not presently considering data sharing for flights to the Middle East or Asia. Shah asked for information regarding other countries which are implementing the passenger name records data sharing requirements. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On November 18, DCM delivered reftel A demarche regarding data sharing for passenger name records to Ministry of Interior Secretary Kamal Shah. Shah noted that the Government of Pakistan (GOP) has been having internal discussion on the issue of providing data to fulfill the Department of Homeland Security's requirements for passenger name records. Shah elaborated to state that the "internal problems" stem from the USG request to provide data on ALL passengers on ALL flights. Shah stated that "our view is that [sharing data on] all direct flights to the US is no problem" and the GOP thought that "they could consider sharing data which would indirectly affect the US." He later expanded upon the GOP idea to explain that "flights to Western Europe" could be considered but was clear that the GOP was not presently considering data sharing for flights to the Middle East or Asia.

¶3. (C) Noting that the GOP was "keen to start direct flights to the U.S.," Shah noted that the direct flights would provide some financial relief to Pakistani International Airways (PIA) and ease travel for Pakistani citizens. He remarked that the local media is "very difficult to manage and that the GOP thought this would be politically exploited and embarrass the government." Shah further stated that this program would "have to be dealt with in Parliament and that would also be a problem." He also conveyed a Ministry of Defense concern that certain laws and regulations would have to be changed in order to implement this program domestically.

¶4. (C) DCM noted that prior to assuming his duties in Islamabad, he worked in S/CT and followed the USG internal discussions on PNR closely. DCM explained that the goal of PNR was to build a global system of travel patterns with information leading to better security and this was not a request specific to Pakistan. DCM also stated

that "in today's world of travel, it is impossible to say where the nexus to U.S. travel would be since you can easily board a plane in Islamabad, travel to Doha or Bangkok and then get a direct flight to the U.S." He noted that DHS sees this as "a tool in the war on terror and an aid in stopping the flow of foreign fighters."

15. (C) Shah inquired about what other countries have currently implemented these requirements and noted that the GOP had inquired among other countries in South Asia and the Middle East to see if there was a similar commitment. DCM explained that any agreements on PNR are kept strictly confidential just as any future agreement with Pakistan would be held in the strictest of confidence. Stating that the GOP received "vague replies," Shah further inquired if "the US could at least tell the GOP the number of countries which have agreed to the PNR conditions" even if the countries cannot be named specifically.

16. (C) Shah then asked if the US might consider implementation on PNR with only flights to Western Europe. DCM responded that the Embassy could relay any proposal which the GOP might like to suggest but that the greater interest of the program would include expanded coverage and that Pakistan had already agreed to Phase I of the program. Noting that Phase I included all flights for PIA and one other airline that would be mutually agreed to at a later date, the DCM suggested that the GOP consider the proposal quickly since the US hopes to finalize the agreement by the end of the year. Shah replied with surprise "we are looking at the phases differently." Shah further clarified that the GOP views Phase I as limited to only PIA and only limited to flights to the U.S.

17. (C) Shah indicated that he would reconvene the "stakeholders" to

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further discuss the issue given that the Administration was about to change and a decision was needed by the end of the year; however he expressed skepticism that the GOP would be able to act quickly on this issue.

18. (SBU) Comment: Post notes that due to security concerns for their crews and in the absence of hotels, British Airways and Lufthansa have cancelled all flights to Pakistan. Other international airlines still in operation include Kuwait Airways, Emirates, Qatar, Etihad, Thai, and Saudi Airlines. At present only PIA flies directly from Pakistan to Western Europe. End Comment.

PATTERSON